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ABSTRACT

The Reading Experiences Associated with Partners (REAP) approach to science combines reading process and product. Students work together sharing their ideas, interests, and knowledge. Results are recorded, and every effort is made to arrange the classrom so that it will aid students in meeting the task objectives. Children can be paired with a peer with whom they like to work, one who possesses similar prerequisite science skills, or one of similar or different ethnic background. Teachers act as guides, stimulators, facilitators, and questioners, as they move smoothly from pair to pair. Paired students select reading activities from a set of approximately ten task cards related to a particular reading concept, and must successfully complete eight of the ten tasks in order to fulfill competency in that area. Each task card contains an aim (give students directive purpose), an activity (a basic reading assignment that all students should successfully complete), and a challenge (an optional enrichment assignment). The REAP approach is fun, effective, inexpensive, and an option for the teacher who is concerned with providing as much individual assistance as possible. (HTH)

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EXPAND CHILDREN'S LIMITS IN READING, INTEGRATE

REAP: Reading Experiences Associated With Partners

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ABSTRACT

The need to have children interact and the many gains that can be made through partner-learning is the bases for REAP. The teacher strives to keep children working cooperatively when partners as paired successfully tackle reading tasks.

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EXPAND CHILDREN's LIMITS IN READING; INTEGRATE
REAP: READING EXPERIENCES ASSOCIATED WITH PARENTS

PRE-THOUGHTS

Reading education is a process that encompasses the total experiences of each individual throughout a lifetime of formal and informal learning (Montgomery Board of Education, 1973). It is at the elementary school level that the greatest impact can be made in reading. At this time a good foundation in reading can be developed that will remain a permanent part of the students' intellectual life. The teacher is the key in forstering a learning style that will help facilitate and enhance the cognitive development of the pupils (Sund, 1983). Through the guidance of the teacher, the pupils should be encouraged to acquire knowledge, explore ideas, ask questions, and seek answers.

The individualization method provides these opportunities for various learning experiences. Individualization offers the students adequate curricular and instructional alternatives. Some of these alternative include learning centers, self-pacing, independent study, and private tutoring. Learning centers aid teachers in instructing pupils. Teachers, through their own creativity, develop a set of tasks which permits the students to progress according to their own capabilities. The scope of activities at the center rangers from "hands on" tasks to written and research assignments. Reading centers are self-directed, thereby granting students the

experience of making decisions, setting limits, and attaining goals. Teachers, in turn, gain extra time to meet individually with students who may need remedial assistance and reinforcement of reading skills. The teacher may also vary the rate of learning by self-pacing the students. The self-pacing path directs students to work to their maximum potential.

As elementary reading teachers, there is the belief that students need to experience the world around them. Youngsters should be given opportunities to develop an awareness of things in their environment that can be explained through use of the senses and on the basis of the orderliness of nature. Very often teachers feel they have met the requirements of individualiation by singularly placing students in a study carrel with a tape. This may be a sure sign of "lonely learning". Children need to interact with their peers. By sharing ideas with others, students can express their own identity and, at the same time, recognize the uniqueness of others.

PARTNER-LEARNING: ADVANTAGES

Since there are such great differences in skills and academic/experiential student backgrounds with a classroom, one common pedagogical method probably will not meet the obvious needs of each youngster's cognitive, affective and psychomotor desires. Thus, the integration of partner-learning: children helping children. Partner-learning has been described by Cohen (1972) as a

situation in which a person provides instructional assistance and guidance to another person. It is not new to educational circles. In the eighth century B.C., Spartans chose older children to tutor youngsters (Anderson 1970). The basis for utilizing partner-learning seems to have been established by Comenius in the Seventeenth century. In his Didactica Magna (1632) he made two references to partner-learning: "He who teaches others teaches himself," and "If a student wished to make progress, he should arrange to give lessons daily in the subjects which he is studying, even if he has to hire his students". Citations from current research substantiates the advantages of partner-learning. Crowhurst (1979) stated that partner-learning is a vehicle that increases student motivation, uses a real audience, and emphasizes the valuable practice of skills. Heward (1982) contended that students provide direct and individual services to help others, and are readily available. He also believed that partner-learning involves total student participation. Lovitt (1977) in his book, In Spite of my Resistance...I've Learned from Children strongly suggested that students working together have to respons to each others questions and may have to defend their reasoning. Mondoli (1982) encouraged partner-learning as a mode of instruction that is somewhat less-threatening and thus more easily accepted by youngsters. She also emphasized the functional advantages: easy to implement, inexpensive, and

minimal teacher preparation. The writers view this type of learning as a promotion of ethnic integration, a decentralization of teacher authority, and avenue for greater freedom of student expression, and a greater sense of student independence and responsibility.

The need to have students interact and the many gains that can be made through partner-learning led the writers to create the approach entitled, REAP: Expand Children's Limits in Reading; Integrate REAP: Reading Experience Associated with Partners. REAP is an activity-centered approach to science. Children are paired with their peers in a manner that is beneficial. Partners can be rotated according to teacher discretion. Interaction is a prime requisite of REAP, so partners would be exchanged as frequently as deemed appropriate. The teacher strives to keep children working cooperatively and to give assistance whenever it is necessary. When partners are paired, they are presented with science tasks.

For example, a series of tasks that develop a student's understanding of letter knowledge might be their first assignment. Students work together sharing their ideas, interests, and knowledge. Results are recorded. Every effort is made to arrange the classroom in such a manner that will aid students in meeting the task objectives.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A REAP-ACTIVITIES CLASSROOM

Clearly, pairing children for direct one-to-one instruction is a most personalized technique. If this is true, how does one pair children to increase instructional opportunities? Consider using one or more of the following suggestions for more dynamic duos. Children can be paired with a peer:

- They like to work with.
- Who possesses similar pre-requisites science skills.
- Of higher or lower academic ability, so that the children can learn from one another (Crohurst, 1982).
- Of similar or different ethnic background (Sharan, 1983).
- Using the random-selection technique.
- According to a science unit pre-test and subsequent results (Heward, 1982).
- According to:
  - Topical interests.
  - Male/female distribution.
  - Regular child versus an exceptional child.

No matter which selection method is most beneficial to and educational situation, keep in mind that the pairing method used will likely be based upon two parameters: the students and the kind of reading activities and content to be presented.

STRATEGEM

Prior to the 1960's, educators emphasized the importance of the product, the answer. The early 1970's reversed such emphasis and focused upon the process or

how students attained their product. Today in classrooms throughout the United States there seems to be a movement toward combining process and product. Placing these two ingredients as equal partners in learning is a most accurate way to describe the REAP scheduling modules. Expository classes would be the vehicle used to give students sufficient and necessary background related to important concepts. The teacher is the active participant here, sharing facts, generalizations, and building to important concepts children should know. A gradual shift now occurs. Students take knowledge gained and apply it to their illustrated task cards. The teacher's role during the period of experimentation is more passive. The teacher acts as a guide, stimulator, facilitator, and questioner, as he/she moves smoothly from pair to pair. Please keep in mind that because of the students and the subject matter that modifications, to the REAP method might be needed. For example, one may wish to extend the large group expository instruction because there is need for more basic background.

REAP is now ready to be initiated. Paired students will select reading activities from a set of approximately ten (10) task cards related to a particular reading concept. The students must successfully complete eight (8) owt of ten (10) tasks in order to fulfill competency in that specific reading area. Cards will be placed in an easy-to-locate section of the classroom so that stu-

dents will have ready access. Each task card contains an aim and activity, and a challenge plus activity. The aim gives students directive purpose. The activity is a basic reading assignment that all students should successfully complete. This activity also gives focus to a major reading concept for example, readiness, word recognition, comprehension... A student(s) can extend their learning through the successful completion of the challenge plus activity. Challenge plus enriches the student and is optional.

REAP combines the essential process and product approach to reading investigation with the student interaction. REAP is fun, effective, inexpensive, and an option for the teacher who is concerned with providing as muich individual assistance as possible.

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